Inmarsat-phone Mini-M terminals are among the smallest and lightest (approximately 2.4 kg.) statellite phones ever made. The cost of the terminal is appx. Rs. 2.75 lakhs, inclusive of all taxes and duties.

(b) The call charge per minute is around Rs. 116/-

(c) Connections are given to Union Ministers, Chief Ministers of States and Government Departments with operational requirements after the technical scrutiny of their applicationsin the Dept. of Telecommunications and subsequent clearence of the case in Wireless Planning and Coordination Wing (WPC) of Ministry of Communications.

(d) In view of security implications, the use of Mini-M terminals has been restricted to the above users to begin with.

Implementation of Justice Talwar Committee Recommendations

779. SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA:

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been inordinate delay in implementing the recomendations of the Justice Talwar Committee on improving the service conditions of Extra-Department (ED) employees in the Postal Department; and

(b) if so, the gist of the recommendations made and the reasons for delay in implementing them?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No Sir, there has been no inordinate delay in the matter.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Transfer of Telephones on Fake Letters

780. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO:
SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the MTNL is incurring huge loss on account of illegal transfer of telephones by officials on the basis of fake letters; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) Sir, three cases of illegal transfer/shifting of telephones by officials on the basis of fake letters came to the notice of MTNL authorities. Details of the cases are given below:

1. A case of change of address for telephone No. 6511517 & 6518980 wherein MTNL Delhi incurred a loss of Rs. 54.04 lacs.

Case referred to CBI for investigation of the involvement of MTNL officers/officials.

2. Shift case of telephone No. 7462285 on the basis of fake application wherein there was no loss to MTNL.

Disciplinary action against the erring officer and the official has been recommended by CGM.

3. Shifting of telephone No. 6838487 & 6932412 on fake documents & using STD/ISD illegally, wherein a loss of Rs. 21.32 lacs to MTNL, Delhi has been incurred.

Case referred to CBI to investigate the involvement of MTNL officials.

Post Offices in Punjab

781. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Post Offices opened in Punjab during the financial year 1996-97 and till date;

(b) the total number of Post Offices opened throughout the country during the last three years;

(c) the number of proposals pending for opening of new Post offices in the State and by when these Post Offices would be Opened: and

(d) how many Post Offices have been upgraded in the State during the said financial year and how many are proposed during the next three years?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA):

(a) The total number of post offices opened in Punjab during the financial year 1996-97 and till date is 12.

(b) The total number of post offices opened throughout the country during the last three years is 490.

(c) No proposal for opening new post office in the State is pending at present.

(d) One post office has been upgraded in the State during the said financial year. So far only the Annual Plan 1997-98 has been approved by the Planning Commission.

A target for opening 2 Departmental Sub-Post offices has been fixed for 1997-98 for Punjab which could be by way of upgradation.

Telephone Facility for Village Panchayats in Vidarabha Region

782. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Village Panchayats in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra provided with telephone facility so far, as on date, district-wise;

(b) the Panchayats in the region which are yet to be provided with telephone facility, district-wise; and

(c) by when Government propose to provide telephone facility to all the Panchayats of the region?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) District-wise information is given in the Statement. (*see* below)

(c) All the Panchayats in Vidarbha region will be provided with telephone facility by the end of the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Statement

Status of Village Panchayats Provided with Telephone Facility

Sl. No.	Name of SSA or District	Total No. of Village Panchayats	No. of Village Panchayats Having Telephone Facility	Balance to be provided
1.	Akola	936	936	NIL
2.	Amravati	804	685	110
3.	Bhandapa	1046	845	201
4.	Buldhana	828	812	10
5.	Chandrapur	804	655	149
6.	Gadchiroli	458	279	179
7.	Wardha	481	481	Nil
8.	Yeotmal	1123	779	344
9.	Nagpur	1584	1235	349
	TOTAL	8064	6707	1357